

Message Text

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44

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15

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R 301333Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7139

INFO AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

USMISSION BERLIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, GW

SUBJECT: CHANCELLOR BRANDT CALLS FOR COMMON SENSE AND
MODERATION IN PRESENT WAVE OF LABOR DISPUTES

REF: BONN 12307

1. SUMMARY. IN A NATIONAL TELEVISION BROADCAST ON AUGUST
28, CHANCELLOR WILLY BRANDT (SPD) EXPRESSED CONCERN
OVER RECENT WILDCAT STRIKES BECAUSE "COMMON GROUND
RULES" ARE NOT BEING OBSERVED. AFTER MEETING WITH TOP
MANAGEMENT AND LABOR ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVES MONDAY
AND TUESDAY, HE SAID, IT IS CLEAR NOW THAT BOTH SIDES
ARE PREPARED TO TALK TO ONE ANOTHER ABOUT THESE DISPUTES.
BRANDT REAFFIRMED THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT FOR
ITS ECONOMIC STABILITY PROGRAM TO REDUCE INFLATION AND
EXPLAINED THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE WORKERS WERE EXCLUDED
FROM THE "STABILITY TAX" IMPOSED ON HIGHER INCOME
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BRACKETS. WHOEVER DESERTS THIS STABILITY PROGRAM,

ABANDONS HIMSELF, THE CHANCELLOR EMPHASIZED. HE ALSO WARNED THAT THIS IS NO TIME FOR EXAGGERATED WAGE DEMANDS OR PRICE INCREASES. END SUMMARY

2. BRANDT SAID HE BELIEVE THAT WORKERS IN MOST ENTERPRISES REALIZE THE DANGER OF DAMAGING THEIR UNIONS WHO REPRESENT THEIR INTERESTS BUT WARNED THAT NO ONE SHOULD UNDERRATE THE IMPORTANCE TO SOCIETY OF THE OBSERVANCE OF THE RULES ON WHICH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE SOCIAL SYSTEM DEPEND. IT IS THE UNIONS AND NO ONE ELSE, HE SAID, WHICH ENSURE IN THE LONG RUN THAT ALL WORKERS BENEFIT FROM ECONOMIC GAINS. HE ADDED: "THAT IS WHY ALMOST EVERYWHERE PEOPLE ARE ON THEIR GUARD AGAINST TROUBLEMAKERS WHO PURSUE OTHER AIMS." "ALL REASONABLE MINDED FORCES CAN ONLY BE INTERESTED IN A BUSINESSLIKE AND CALM DEVELOPMENT," HE CONCLUDED.

3. COMMENT: THIS IS THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE MAJOR BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG METALWORKERS' STRIKE IN NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1971 THAT CHANCELLOR BRANDT HAS INTERVENED IN A LABOR DISPUTE. THIS REFLECTS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S CONCERN ABOUT EFFORTS OF RADICAL ELEMENTS TO UNDERMINE THE UNION POSITION AT THE FACTORY LEVEL AND WEAKEN THEIR AUTHORITY AS A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PARTNER.

FOLLOWING THEIR MEETING WITH CHANCELLOR BRANDT, CONFEDERATION OF GERMAN METAL EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATIONS REPRESENTATIVES PROPOSED SUMMIT TALKS TO THE DGB METALWORKERS UNION WHICH MAY ACCEPT THIS EMPLOYERS OFFER AT ITS CURRENT EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING. HOWEVER, FOR TACTICAL REASONS, THE UNION HAS INDICATED RELUCTANCE NOW TO NEGOTIATE A COST OF LIVING SUPPLEMENT BEFORE NEGOTIATIONS START ON NEXT YEAR'S CONTRACT AND HOLDS EMPLOYERS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PRESENT DEVELOPMENT BECAUSE OF THEIR REFUSAL TO AGREE TO NEGOTIATE A SUPPLEMENTARY COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT AT THE LAST SUMMIT MEETING ON MAY 30.

NOW IT APPEARS THE WAVE OF WILDCAT STRIKES, WHICH HAS BEEN MOSTLY CONFINED TO THE METAL FABRICATING INDUSTRY IN THE STATE OF NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA, IS TAPERING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OFF FOR THE TIME BEING. FORD IN COLOGNE, WHERE SOME VIOLENCE WAS REPORTED INVOLVING MOSTLY TURKISH WORKERS ON AUGUST 28, WAS SCHEDULED TO REOPEN PLANT OPERATIONS AUGUST 29.
HILLENBRAND

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